

12 Healthy Habits

Habit 11: Portion Power

A YEAR OF BUILDING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

BENEFITS:

- Helps maintain weight by controlling calories

GOAL:

- Be aware of the portion sizes you eat

Take Control of How Much You Eat!

We live in a society that promotes super-sized meals, triple decker hamburgers, all you can eat buffets, double stuffed cookies and never ending bowls of pasta. It is easy to see how our calorie intake has ballooned as our portion sizes have increased. We want the best value for our money, but more is not always better.

Even at home we are eating on larger plates and are distracted by television. The size of chicken breasts has even increased so instead of being a 5-6 ounce breast it can be as much as 10-12 ounces. Our visual clues say one breast is what we need to eat for dinner but for a 2000 calorie diet the recommendation is 5 1/2 ounces of protein foods for the whole day.

So we need to be portion aware and learn simple ways to help us eat within our guidelines. To find out the calories you need, visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

In studies done by the Food and Brand Lab at Cornell University, most found that people can eat 20% less without noticing. In fact, we often don't realize how much we do eat. Always portion food out into a dish. We eat about 20-30% more when we eat straight from the bag or container. We also tend to eat more if we are given more. Moviegoers who ate popcorn from a large bucket ate 53% more than those who chose a medium-sized bucket. So we need to get in the habit of choosing and serving smaller portions all around. It is also interesting that we tend to eat more if the

food blends into the color of the plate. Mashed potatoes on a white plate lead us to eat 18% more than if they are served on a darker plate with more contrast.

So we need to pay attention to what we eat. That doesn't mean we have to measure and count calories, we just need to make a few small changes like using smaller plates, using contrasting plates, pouring our food into a dish and stopping when we're full. If we make three small, 100-calorie changes each day, in one year we'll be as much as 30 pounds lighter.



Portion Power Ups

1. Pre-Portion Tempting Treats

The bigger the package, the more you'll pour out, so measure out portions into smaller bags when you get foods home so you won't be tempted.

2. Head Off the Mindless Munch

When bread is on the table or we have a tube of crackers beside the soup bowl, we tend to not think about how much we're eating. So take your serving and then have it removed from the table. Also avoid eating while distracted by television or computer screens.

3. Downsize the Dishes

Smaller plates make the food look like more and we don't feel like we are missing something. So use a standard 8-10 inch plate instead of a 12-14 inch one.

4. Limit Your Choices

The more options you have, the more you want to try (think the potluck dinner or buffet!) so only have a few items available.

5. Be Careful What You See

If we keep something in view, we tend to eat more of it. Office workers indulged 71% more often when candy was kept in a clear dish on their desk than those who kept it out of sight. In contrast, people who kept baby carrots in plain sight ate 25% more during a day.

6. Think Before You Drink

The eye is a poor judge of volume when it comes to glasses of varying height and width. We tend to pour more into a short and wide glass than we do a tall and narrow glass.



Here's a simple rule to portion a plate properly: Divide it in half. Fill one side with fruits and vegetables, leaving the other side for equal portions of lean protein and whole grain.

Down Size Me

Small downsizes can add up to big changes over time. From fast food items to snack foods to chicken breast at home, size does matter. Check this out:

| | Small | Medium | Large |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| French Fries | 230 cal | 340 cal | 510 cal |
| Cheeseburger | Regular 290 cal | Double 430 cal | Quarter # 520 cal |
| Cola | 16 oz. 140 cal | 21 oz. 200 cal | 30 oz. 280 cal |
| Chicken Breast | 3 oz. 128 cal | 6 oz. 257 cal | 10 oz. 428 cal |
| Snickers Bar | Fun Size 80 cal | Regular 250 cal | 2 to Go 440 cal |
| DQ Hot Fudge Sundae | 300 cal | 440 cal | 610 cal |

Eat
Breakfast

Get
Cooking

Eat
More Fish

Get
Moving

Good
Fats

Go
Meatless

Veggie
Up

Get
Stronger

Sugar
Down

Make
Grains
Whole

Portion
Power

Be
Mindful